

BINARY BOMBSHELLS

# Values exist in all technologies



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There’s a longstanding myth that technologies are value-neutral. There’s nothing inherently positive or negative about any given technology – proponents argue it’s how people use it.

Twitter leads to crowd-sourced harassment, credit cards are debt inducing and Google slurps up everyone’s private data.

Of course, it’s not all negative. FaceTime, for example, visually connected people like never before, and WhatsApp securely encrypted communication between a billion people.

It’s important to realize that it’s not just a high-tech problem; even ordinary everyday technology that we’ve taken for granted have embedded values.

Most recently, the myth of technology being value-neutral has been parroted through the saying that “Guns don’t kill people, people kill people.” Guns are a heavily politicized issue these days, but it’s rather clear that guns are often used to kill animals and people, and some are designed to optimize that process.

A subtle but egregious example of technology having imbued value is in a set of racist bridges built

in the 1900s. Yes, even boring old bridges can be problematic.

Despite never winning an election, then-New York public official Robert Moses controlled millions of dollars in public funding, some of which he used for highways.

Moses owned beaches on Long Island and started the construction of public parkways to connect New York City residents with his beaches. But he didn’t want Black residents spending time at his beaches, so he came up with a scheme to hinder them from ever getting there.

He intentionally built bridges lower than normal, so buses would not be able to go down the parkways. Black residents who typically relied on public transportation would now be unable to reach the beaches.

In 2017, CityLab reported that the average clearance on Moses’ parkway is around 15 inches shorter than other parkways constructed around the same time. New York City has invested in implementing a bus route to reach what was formerly Moses’ beach, but the fact that the bridges are still low today demonstrates the lasting impact of the

racism embedded in his infrastructure.

In some cases, the impact of technology isn’t realized until decades or centuries later when it may be too late to reverse institutionalization of values.

With artificial intelligence usage on the rise, we’re on the forefront of new technologies being accessible to the masses. Some, such as more realistic CPU players in video games, are going to be welcomed with open arms, while others, such as advanced facial recognition, raise privacy questions.

Throughout the semester, my column, Binary Bombshells, will analyze different technologies that we use day-to-day, examining the values they contain, what effects they have upon us and any avenues for improvement.

I hope readers will question new and old technologies before beginning to use them to determine whether they are likely to be advantageous in the long term. Rather than being beholden to those who make and design technologies, as users we should rise up and ensure that they actually serve us.

**Follow Kunal on Twitter**  
@legoktm

*Binary Bombshells discusses values embedded in technologies that we use every day. It appears every other week on Thursday.*

## New building on the rise

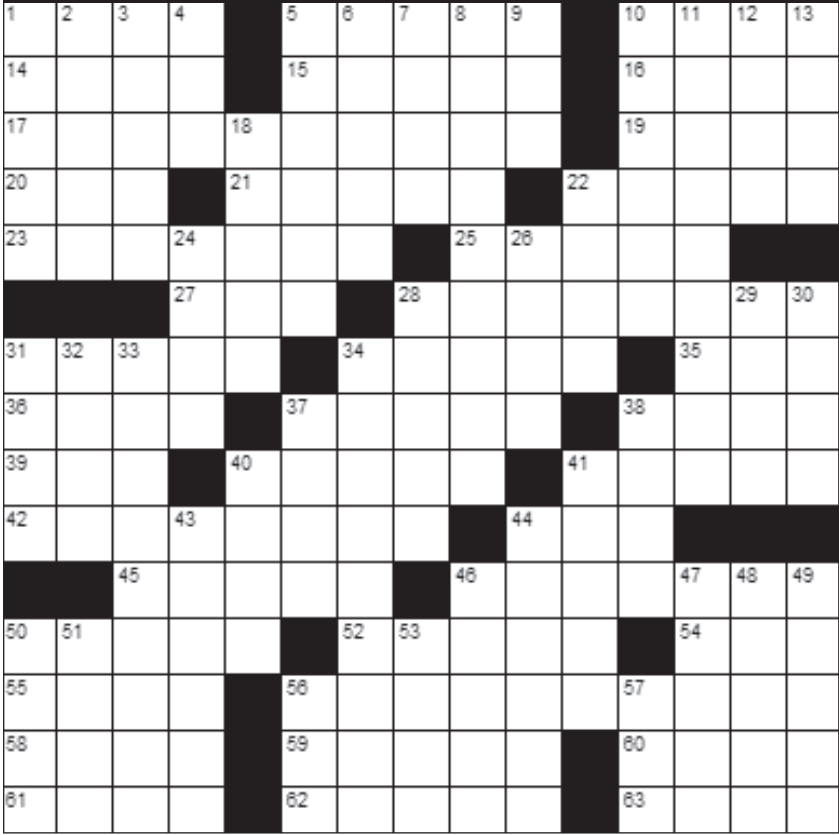


KUNAL MEHTA | SPARTAN DAILY

Construction workers move up to the fourth floor while building what will become the new Interdisciplinary Science Building. After a groundbreaking ceremony in May 2019, the building began to rise over the past two months and is expected to open to students and faculty members in 2022.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### CROSSWORD PUZZLE



ACROSS

- 1. Happy
- 5. Greek letter
- 10. Tablet
- 14. Gray wolf
- 15. Coach
- 16. Largest continent
- 17. Finally
- 19. Male turkeys
- 20. Wager
- 21. In base 8
- 22. Explosive devices
- 23. Gist
- 25. Creepy
- 27. In the past
- 28. Kin
- 31. Smelter waste
- 34. Numbskull
- 35. Regret
- 36. Awestruck
- 37. An unidentified aircraft
- 38. Arizona river
- 39. Eastern Standard Time
- 40. Chocolate-flavored coffee
- 41. Harness racer
- 42. Lose visibility in heavy snow
- 44. Louisville Slugger

- 45. Abyss
- 46. Throw away
- 50. Scottish for “Child”
- 52. Our planet
- 54. Spy agency
- 55. Wings
- 56. It’s made from antiparticles
- 58. Focusing glass
- 59. Leaf opening
- 60. Diminish
- 61. Netting
- 62. Type of poplar tree
- 63. Probabilities

DOWN

- 1. Parish land
- 2. Adores
- 3. Assists
- 4. Put clothing on
- 5. Plaster
- 6. Angry
- 7. Big party
- 8. Periods of 1000 years
- 9. One or more
- 10. Jargon
- 11. Three-dimensional
- 12. Arm or leg
- 13. Young girl
- 18. Forceps
- 22. Broth (Scottish)
- 24. Where the sun rises
- 26. Behold, in old Rome
- 28. A quantity of no importance (archaic)
- 29. Govern
- 30. 365 days
- 31. Sketched
- 32. Impetuous
- 33. They make eyeglasses
- 34. Records
- 37. Razzes
- 38. General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
- 40. Average
- 41. Ottoman title
- 43. Flail
- 44. Caped Crusader
- 46. Illegal activity
- 47. Group of eight
- 48. Villain
- 49. Fees for buses
- 50. Emollient
- 51. Away from the wind
- 53. At the peak of
- 56. An Old Testament king
- 57. Pair

### SUDOKU PUZZLE

Complete the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusively.

8		6		5	1			
4		7		8			2	3
6				1	9			2
1	3						4	8
5				3	4			6
3	8			2		4		7
				6	1	8		9

### SOLUTIONS 01/29/2020

P	R	O	V	E		U	R	L	S		B	A	R	B
L	I	M	I	T		N	O	A	H		A	G	A	R
E	D	I	L	E		T	A	C	O		N	O	V	A
D	E	T	E	R	M	I	N	E	D		D	R	E	E
						N	I	L			D	A	M	A
R	A	T	B	A	G		B	E	I	S	A			
A	R	I	E	L		O	U	T	L	A	S	T	E	D
S	E	E	D			A	R	R	A	Y		T	I	R
P	A	R	C	H	M	E	N	T		B	E	N	N	E
						L	O	E	S		B	U	R	G
						D	R	O	W	N		D	U	G
P	O	E	T			A	N	T	I	M	A	T	T	E
I	N	C	H			B	E	A	R		B	R	A	V
M	O	T	E			L	A	R	K		O	I	L	E
P	R	O	S			E	R	O	S		O	M	E	N

8	7	1	5	6	3	4	2	9
3	4	5	7	9	2	8	1	6
6	2	9	1	4	8	7	5	3
5	3	7	9	8	1	6	4	2
1	8	2	4	3	6	9	7	5
9	6	4	2	7	5	3	8	1
7	5	8	6	1	9	2	3	4
2	9	3	8	5	4	1	6	7
4	1	6	3	2	7	5	9	8

### JOKIN’ AROUND

What happens if life gives you melons?

You’re dyslexic.

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